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AN APPEAL TO AMERICAN HELMINTHOLOGISTS

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Some years ago the muskrat was introduced into Bohemia. This animal has not only taken possession of his new home, but soon overspread the whole country and is now continuing his conquering course beyond the boundaries of Bohemia in the neighboring lands of Bavaria, Saxony, etc.

This fact is certainly in zoogeographical respects a very interesting one. It offers, so to speak, an academic instance for demonstrating some general biological laws concerned in the geographical distribution and spreading of animals, an instance that especially for American zoologists would be of some interest as relating to a well known representative of the North American mammalian fauna.

But it is not my intention to dwell here on this point. Nor yet on the economic side of the introduction of the muskrat into Bohemia which has proved to be most disastrous to pisciculture in our country by its destructive action (burrowing in the pond dams, etc.), although this side might be also of some interest to the American zoologists interested in the economic aspect of the science. The muskrat as a fur-bearing animal is of economic importance, and the experiences we have had in Bohemia on the possible, incredible rate of increase in number of individuals, would perhaps give some hints for protective measures in North America.

I will only call attention to the parasitological side of the muskrat problem. It is obvious that a detailed study of the parasitological fauna of the muskrat in his new environmental conditions in Bohemia, respectively Europe, might throw some light on several general problems of parasitology.

I have myself already commenced this study, but I soon learned with regret and to my discomfiture, that the indispensable comparative basis for such studies, a knowledge of the parasites of the muskrat in his original American home, is lacking. I find this confirmed in a paper recently published by an American colleague, Professor Barker (Lincoln, Neb.), who also states that very little is known on the parasites of the muskrat. For this reason I beg to draw the attention of American helminthologists to this point and recommend to them the study of the parasites of one of the most typical North American mammals.

I am sincerely glad that I have the opportunity to publish this appeal in the columns of a new American journal devoted to the study of parasitology. I greet and welcome this journal and I am sure that it will contribute much to the general progress of parasitology.